AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #219

BOOK TWO: EARTH
CHAPTER NINETEEN: "The Guru"

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As Broadcast Draft
November 9th, 2006

ACT ONE

EXT. UPPER RING - UNCLE AND ZUKO'S NEW APARTMENT - MORNING

Uncle and Zuko have settled into their fancy new apartment in the Upper Ring. Uncle stands in the spacious kitchen, preparing a hearty breakfast of jook (it looks like an unappetizing bowl of cream of wheat.) Zuko enters, rubbing his eyes.

ZUKO
(groggy)
What's that smell?

UNCLE
It's jook. I'm sure you wouldn't like it.

Zuko smells the pot of jook, like he's inhaling the fragrance of a beautiful flower.

ZUKO
(DEEP INHALE) Actually, it smells delicious. I'd love a bowl, Uncle.

Zuko happily holds up his bowl. Uncle stares at Zuko for a beat, taken off guard by Zuko's uncharacteristic enthusiasm.

Zuko continues to hold the bowl out. Uncle happily ladles some into it.

UNCLE
Now that your fever is gone, you seem different somehow.

ZUKO
It's a new day -- we've got a new apartment, new furniture, and today's the grand opening of your new tea shop. Things are looking up, Uncle.

Zuko happily slurps up his jook. Uncle smiles.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING CHAMELION BAY - MORNING

Appa, Aang, and Sokka land on a hill, overlooking a Water Tribe encampment below.

AANG
You haven't seen your dad in over two years, you must be so excited!

We reveal Sokka doesn't look so much excited as scared.

SOKKA
I know I should be but... I just feel sick to my stomach.

AANG
Don't be nervous. He's going to be so happy to see you.

SOKKA
So what about you, are you nervous to meet this Guru?

AANG
Not at all. I'm ready to master the Avatar state -- I'll do whatever it takes.

Sokka nods and jumps down off Appa.

AANG (cont'd)
See you in a week. Yip-yip!

Appa and Aang take off, leaving Sokka alone. He takes A DEEP BREATH, and heads down the hill.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WATER TRIBE CAMP - A LITTLE LATER

(NOTE: This should be a very emotionally powerful sequence. It will require excellent staging, acting, and music to sell it!) Sokka hesitantly walks into camp with a slumped posture and nervous expression -- he's not sure if he belongs with these men. As he walks past the other warriors, they all look surprised to see him. But after a beat, they all stand in respect and a couple men give him a manly tribal handshake.Sokka smiles, regaining some of his confidence. One of the warriors gestures toward a large tent at the end of camp, as if to say 'you're father's in there.' Sokka heads toward the tent.

INT. HAKODA'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Sokka pokes his head in and sees his dad engrossed in a battle map with Bato and two other warriors. Bato notices Sokka first and gives Hakoda a nudge and points toward Sokka. Hakoda looks up and his hard, warrior-like grimace melts into a warm, fatherly smile.

WARRIOR #2
Sokka, good to see you.

HAKODA
Sokka...

Sokka tries to hold back his tears.

SOKKA
Hi, Dad.

Sokka can't bear it anymore, he runs over and hugs his father for the first time in two years. Father and son continue their emotional reunion -- neither one letting go.

INT. BA SING SE PALACE - THRONE ROOM - MORNING

The Earth King sits on his throne, petting his bear who sits beside him. Azula, Mai, and Ty Lee (still disguised as Kyoshi warriors) stand before him.

EARTH KING
(to his bear)
Look Bosco! The Kyoshi warriors are here to protect us. Aren't you excited?

BOSCO
(PLEASED NOISE)

EARTH KING
(to the girls)
It's been a difficult week for me. My most trusted advisor, Long Feng, and his Dai Li agents tried to take control of Ba Sing Se from me.

AZULA
It's terrible when you can't trust the people who are closest to you.

EARTH KING
But there is good news -- as we speak, the Council of Five is meeting to plan an invasion of the Fire Nation this summer -- on the day of a solar eclipse!

Azula and the girls share a look.

AZULA
Really? Now that sounds like a fascinating and brilliant plan.

Azula flashes a little, evil smile. The king continues petting Bosco, oblivious to the danger he is in.

INT. BA SING SE - COUNCIL OF GENERALS WAR ROOM - DAY

Katara stands over a large war map on the floor (an Earth Kingdom version of the war map in 1.12.) Fire Nation tokens (representing armies) are spread out across the Earth Kingdom. Around Katara stand the COUNCIL OF GENERALS - a group of a dozen Earth Kingdom army leaders (including General Sung.) General How moves several Earth Kingdom tokens from Ba Sing Se to the west coast of the Earth Kingdom (where General Fong's base is located.) Momo curiously watches the tokens move.

GENERAL HOW
General Fong's base will serve as the launching point for the attack. In exactly two months, the Army and Navy will invade the Fire Nation on the Day of Black Sun.

Momo suddenly pounces on the map, knocking over all the Fire Nation tokens.

KATARA
Or we could send in Momo to do some damage! (LAUGHS, PETERS OUT) Sorry.

The Generals stare back at her, humorless. Katara picks up Momo. General How hands Katara some official-looking scrolls.

GENERAL HOW
All we need is the Earth King's seal in order to execute the plan.

KATARA
I'll get these scrolls to him right away. Thank you, General How.

Katara bows and exits.

EXT. ABOVE MOUNTAIN RANGE NEAR EASTERN AIR TEMPLE - SUNSET

Aang flies on Appa through the mist and the temple comes into view. He looks closer at the ruined and overgrown buildings and notices a tiny figure sitting in the open gardens. He is an ancient man sitting in a meditative pose, facing directly at the approaching party, as if he was expecting Aang at this moment.

EXT. GARDENS OF THE EASTERN AIR TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Appa lands on the grounds and Aang looks down at the figure. The guru remains motionless with his eyes closed, and he doesn't acknowledge their arrival. Aang tentatively approaches the seated figure.

AANG
Um... Hello? You're Guru Pathik (PRON: Pah-teek), right? The person who attached the note to Appa's horn?

GURU PATHIK
Indeed. I was a spiritual brother of your people, and a personal friend of Monk Gyatso.

AANG
In your note, you said you could teach me to gain control of the Avatar state. How?

GURU PATHIK
You must gain balance within yourself before you can bring balance to the world.
And the first step to gaining balance begins with this. Drink up!

The guru offers Aang a cup of thick liquid. Aang downs the contents of the cups, then suddenly spits it all out.

AANG
Blech! It tastes like onion-and-banana juice!

GURU PATHIK
That's because it is. Yum yum!

EXT. WOODS - SUNSET

Xin Fu and Master Yu lead an ostrich-horse drawn carriage through the woods (NOTE: they are far outside Ba Sing Se now.) Toph is in a metal box chained to the bed of the carriage. The box only has a tiny opening for air. As the cart comes to a fork in the trail, Xin Fu begins steering left.

MASTER YU
I believe we need to go right.

XIN FU
What are you talking about? The Beifong estate's this way.

MASTER YU
I'm quite certain you're mistaken.

They are interrupted by a BANGING on the metal box.

TOPH
Hey! Can you two old ladies quit your bickering for a second? I gotta go to the bathroom.

MASTER YU
Okay, but make it quick.

Master Yu takes out the key to the box but Xin Fu grabs it away from him.

XIN FU
What's wrong with you?

MASTER YU
(realizing)
Oh, very sneaky, Toph. Nice try, but you can't trick me.

Toph BANGS on the box again.

TOPH
Let me out of here so I can kick both your butts!

She rocks the box back and forth.

XIN FU
Quit your banging. You might think you're the greatest Earthbender in the world, but even you can't bend metal.

INT. PALACE - GUEST CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Azula (still in costume, but no makeup) stands behind Mai and Ty Lee, who are taking off their makeup in the mirror.

AZULA
We have been presented with an extraordinary opportunity, girls.

TY LEE
Mai finally gets to wear makeup that's not totally depressing?

MAI
Ha ha.

AZULA
I'm talking about conquering the whole Earth Kingdom.

Mai and Ty Lee look at each other.

56 AZULA (cont'd) 56
(explaining)
For a hundred years, the Fire Nation has hammered away at Ba Sing Se from the outside. But now we're on the inside... and we can take it by ourselves.

TY LEE
Gosh, you're so confident. I really admire that about you.

AZULA
From the inside, we're in perfect position to organize a coup and overthrow the Earth King. The key is the Dai Li.
(beat)
Whoever controls the Dai Li, controls Ba Sing Se.

EXT. EASTERN AIR TEMPLE - 3:45 AM

The camera pans down from the temple to the mountainside, through several cross-dissolving shots, until we reach the bottom of the valley.

EXT. BANKS OF A CREEK IN THE VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The guru and a sleepy-eyed Aang stand at the edge of a creek that is clogged with debris. The water trickles through a few grimy pools. The guru uses it to illustrate his words.

GURU PATHIK
In order to master the Avatar state you must open all the chakras. Aang, tell me everything you know about chakras (PRON: CHUCK-ruhs).

AANG
What are chakras?

GURU PATHIK
I see. I guess we'll start with the basics.

He directs Aang's attention to the creek.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
The water flows through this creek, much like the energy flows through your body. As you see, there are several pools where they water swirls around before flowing on. These pools are like our chakras.

AANG
So, chakras are pools of spiraling energy in our bodies?

GURU PATHIK
Exactly.

The guru points at the creek with a long stick.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
If nothing else were around, this creek would flow pure and clear. However, life is messy and things tend to fall in the creek. And then what happens?

AANG
The creek can't flow?

GURU PATHIK
Yes. But if we open the paths between the pools...

The guru does just that with a stick, and we see the result as fresh water starts to clean out the filth from each pool.

AANG
The energy flows!

INT. DEEP INSIDE A CAVE UNDER THE MOUNTAIN - 4:00 AM

Aang is seated, meditatively, on the floor of the dark cave. The guru sits in the same position, across from Aang.

GURU PATHIK
There are seven chakras that go up the body. Each pool of energy has a purpose, and can be blocked by a specific kind of emotional muck.
(serious)
Be warned -- opening the chakras is an intense experience. And once you begin this process, you cannot stop until all seven are open. Are you ready?

AANG
I'll do whatever it takes.

GURU PATHIK
First we will open the Earth Chakra, located at the base of the spine. It deals with survival, and is blocked by fear.

Aang closes his eyes and holds his hands in the same meditative position as the guru. As the guru speaks, the camera slips into Aang's "head-space" and we see his memories and visions.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
(in a calming voice)
What are you most afraid of? Let your fears become clear to you...

We see RED COLORED visions of Aang's fears: some scenes from previous episodes, some new shots -- including bits of the Blue Spirit coming at him with swords, images from Aang's dream in 201, quick moments of Katara being buried by General Fong, etc. Suddenly, Aang hears a roar of flames. He opens his eyes and finds the Fire Lord standing where the guru was, silhouetted by a fiery blaze! Aang is terrified.

AANG
AAAAHHHHHH!!!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DEEP INSIDE A CAVE UNDER THE MOUNTAIN - 4:00 AM

The cave is filled with fire as the Fire Lord stands menacingly above Aang, who shrinks away in terror.

AANG
AAAHHHHH!!!!

GURU PATHIK (V.O.)
(firm, but calm)
Aang, your vision is not real.

We cut back to reality and see that nothing has actually changed: The guru and Aang sit in the empty cave as before, but Aang's eyes are closed and he is shaking and sweating.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
You are concerned for your survival, but you must surrender those fears.

We see that Aang begins to calm down, though his eyes are still closed.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
(soothing)
Let your fears flow down the creek...

In a slow transition, we see Aang's vision of the Fire Lord melt into the play of light and shadow on the cave's surface. He opens his eyes to reality.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
(smiling)
You have opened your Earth Chakra.

EXT. SPACE BEHIND A BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL - 5:30 AM

Aang and the guru are surrounded by the pleasant thunder of a waterfall, as they sit side by side behind the sheet of falling water.

GURU PATHIK
(leading Aang)
Next is the...

AANG
(looking at the huge waterfall)
...Water Chakra?

GURU PATHIK
Brilliant! Maybe one day you will be a guru too. This chakra deals with pleasure, and is blocked by guilt.

Aang forms his hands in the same position as the guru and closes his eyes.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
(soothing)
Now, look at all the guilt which burdens you so. What do you blame yourself for?

In ORANGE COLORED visions, we see Aang running away from the Air Nomads, yelling at Toph when Appa was stolen, hiding the message from Katara and Sokka, Jet's demise. Finally, Aang sees all of the hurt and fear he inflicted on others when he was in the Avatar state.

AANG
(dreamily, but wracked with guilt)
I ran away. I hurt all of those people...

GURU PATHIK
Accept the reality that these things happened, but do not let them cloud and poison your energy. If you are to be a positive influence on the world, you need to forgive yourself.

Aang's face is still twisted in a pained expression, with his eyes closed -- then his expression changes to a peaceful one, as he forgives himself.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CAMP - MORNING

Hakoda and Sokka fill a Water Tribe tangle mine detonator cap with blasting jelly. Bato and several other warriors are with them.

HAKODA
This bay leads directly to the outskirts of Ba Sing Se. We've been using these tangle mines to stop the Fire Nation ships from getting through.

BATO
Your father invented tangle mines himself.

Sokka admires the large, spherical mine, which is made with a bamboo frame covered with dried animal skin.

SOKKA
Destructive, buoyant, and (DISGUSTED SOUND) terrible smelling.

HAKODA
Very perceptive. The mines are filled with skunkfish and seaweed. When a ship detonates the mine, the seaweed tangles up the propeller -- and the foul smell forces people to abandon the ship. I call it... the stink 'n' sink!

SOKKA
(HUGE LAUGH) Good one, Dad.

Bato stares at them with a humorless expression.

BATO
You're definitely your father's son.

They are interrupted by WARRIOR #1, who runs up to them.

WARRIOR #1
Hakoda, our scouts have spotted four Fire Nation ships.

HAKODA
(ordering)
Bato, get these mines loaded up.
(to the warriors)
The rest of you men, prepare for battle.

The warriors all rush off. Sokka stays put.

SOKKA
Uh, what should I do, Dad?

HAKODA
(sternly)
Aren't you listening? I just said the rest of you men get ready for battle.

Sokka smiles proudly and rushes off to join the other warriors.

EXT. UPPER RING - THE JASMINE DRAGON - MORNING

It's the grand opening. Uncle and Zuko stand outside, watching as eager customers enter the shop. They are wearing nice tea serving outfits.

UNCLE
Who thought when we came to this city as refugees, that I'd end up owning my own tea shop? Follow your passion, Zuko, and life will reward you.

ZUKO
Congratulations, Uncle.

UNCLE
I'm very thankful.

ZUKO
You deserve it. The Jasmine Dragon will be the best tea shop in the city.

UNCLE
No. I'm thankful because you decided to share this special day with me. It means more than you know.

Uncle pats Zuko on the back. Zuko turns and gives Uncle a big hug. Uncle looks shocked, but then hugs him back extra tight.

ZUKO
Now let's make these people some tea!

Zuko heads inside. Uncle is overcome with emotion.

UNCLE
(smiling proudly)
Yes. Let's make some tea.

Uncle follows Zuko inside.

EXT. CLIFF FACING A PART IN THE MOUNTAIN RANGE - 6:30 AM

The sun rises in a brilliant, beautiful display. Aang and the guru are bathed in the morning light, sitting next to each other and facing the sun.

GURU PATHIK
Third is the Fire Chakra, located in the stomach.

AANG
My Fire Chakra would like to eat something other than onion-banana juice.

GURU PATHIK
Good one! Moving on: This chakra deals with willpower and is blocked by shame.
(softer)
What are you ashamed of? What are your biggest disappointments in yourself?

Aang closes his eyes and the camera slips into his head-space over the guru's dialogue. We see YELLOW COLORED visions of Aang's embarrassment, like his difficulties Earthbending. Finally the visions lead to Aang burning Katara with his foolish foray into Firebending.

AANG
(dreamily, but firm)
I'm never going to Firebend again. I can't.

GURU PATHIK
You will never find balance if you deny this part of your life. You are the Avatar, and therefore, you are a Firebender.

Aang EXHALES deeply.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
Hmm... That chakra opened less like a flowing creek, and more like a... burping bison.

AANG
(BURPS) Tastes like onions and bananas. But strangely, something else... Pickles?

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - DAY

Mai and Ty Lee (still disguised) stand guard at the entryway to the King's palace. Mai slumps against a column while Ty Lee does some stretches. Two Dai Li agents crawl down from the roof and cling to the wall, spying on them.

MAI
(SIGHS) I'm tired of wearing this girly disguise. I don't know how anyone can fight in this.

TY LEE
Maybe that's why it was so easy to beat the Kyoshi Warriors and take their clothes.

Ty Lee mimes her chi-blocking move to demonstrate.

MAI
How much longer do we have to serve the Earth King? If I have to clean up one more pile of bear poop, I'm gonna throw up.

TY LEE
Princess Azula promised we would go back to the Fire Nation as soon as we capture the Avatar. We just have to be patient.

MAI
Shush up. Do you want the whole palace to know we're Fire Nation?

TY LEE
(sotto)
Sorry.

The Dai Li agents look at each other and nod. They slink back up the wall onto the roof. A beat later, Azula emerges from the palace. She looks at Mai and Ty Lee sternly for a moment -- are they busted? Then she breaks into a smile.

AZULA
Good work, girls. I'm sure the Dai Li will deliver the message.

EXT. AIR TEMPLE GARDEN - 12:00 PM

The guru sits alone in the lush garden.

GURU PATHIK
The fourth chakra is located in the heart. It deals with love, and is blocked by grief.

Aang's chipper mood takes a downturn. He closes his eyes and meditates. The guru's voice leads him into visions of GREEN COLORED memories.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
Lay all your grief out in front of you.

We see brief memories of Aang at this temple when he was a little boy when he met Appa in the stables, from 216. We see he and Gyatso in a raging pie fight with the women Airbenders of the Eastern temple. An image of Gyatso laughing cross-dissolves to Gyatso's skeleton.

Aang opens his eyes and sees that he is seated on a vast cloud-scape. All of the Air Nomads he knew in his former life sit in front of him, solemnly meditating. He sees them fade away and he starts to cry silently. He is alone, but hears the guru's voice.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
You have indeed felt a great loss. But love is a form of energy, and it swirls all around us. The Air Nomads' love for you has not left this world - it is still inside of your heart, and it is reborn in the form of new love.

Aang's vision turns again to Katara, the first time he laid eyes on her when she found him in the iceberg.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
(very gently)
Let the pain flow away... Very good.

Aang opens his eyes. His cheeks are tear-stained, but he is smiling warmly.

AANG
Can I have some onion-banana juice, please?

INT. VAST CHAMBER IN THE AIR TEMPLE - 4:00 PM

Aang and the guru sit across from each other in the dark, echoing chamber (full of female Airbender statues).

GURU PATHIK
The fifth in the chain is the Sound Chakra, located in the throat. It deals with truth, and is blocked by lies -- the ones we tell ourselves.

Aang closes his eyes and tries to get into the meditation.

Over the guru's voice, we see light BLUE COLORED visions of Aang, Katara and Sokka on Appa's saddle in the end of 102. We hear an echo of Katara from that time:

KATARA (FROM 1.02)
Why didn't you tell us you were the Avatar?

In reality, we see the meditating Aang echo his response:

AANG
'Cause I never wanted to be.

GURU PATHIK
You cannot lie about your own nature. You must accept that you are the Avatar.

Aang relaxes in his meditation. We see visions of Katara give way to Aang alone on the mountaintop, looking down on the world (from the opening title sequence). For the first time we see the reverse view, and we see that Aang has an expression of calm content as he looks down on the world.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
Very good Aang, you have opened the Chakra of truth.

EXT. BALCONY OF A TOWER, FACING THE SUNSET - 6:30 PM

Aang and the guru sit facing the horizon as the sun sets and the golden fire of the sky gives way to the indigo glow of twilight.

GURU PATHIK
The sixth pool of energy is the Light Chakra, located in the center of the forehead. It deals with insight and is blocked by illusion.

Aang takes the correct hand position and closes his eyes.

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
The greatest illusion of this world is the illusion of separation.
(MORE)

GURU PATHIK (cont'd)
Things you think are separate and different are actually one and the same.

The guru's words are heard over the opening title sequence of the world map, in INDIGO COLORS. We see the four colors of the nations fade up, as we know them, defining their separations.

AANG
Like the four nations.

GURU PATHIK
Yes. We are all one people, but we live as if divided.

AANG
We're all connected. Everything is connected.

GURU PATHIK
That's right. Even the separation of the four elements is an illusion.

CROSS DISSOLVE TO:

INT. METAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

As we hear the Guru's voice continue, we see Toph feel the walls of metal surrounding her.

GURU (V.O.)
If you open your mind, you will see that all the elements are one -- four parts of the same whole. Even metal is just a part of earth, that has been purified and refined.

Toph places her hand on the back wall and concentrates, 'opening her mind.' **TOPH VISION:** she sees tiny particles of Earth embedded in the metal. Toph focuses her chi on the metal. Her hand trembles as she tries to bend the small particles of Earth in the metal. Nothing happens.

TOPH
(LONG, DEEP EXHALE) Come on, metal. Budge.

Toph tries again. Her hand trembles. After much effort and concentration the metal buckles! (NOTE: Metal should not split yet.) Toph shakes out her hand.

TOPH (cont'd)
Whoo! Toph, you rule.

Toph places her hand back on the metal and focuses her chi again...

EXT. UPPER RING - THE JASMINE DRAGON - SUNSET

Katara walks back to the palace with Momo. On her way, she sees the tea shop. She looks down at the scrolls that she's supposed to deliver to the King, then back at the tea shop.

KATARA
What do you say, Momo? A cup of tea before we get back to the King?

MOMO
(HAPPY CHITTERS)

She heads into the tea shop.

INT. THE JASMINE DRAGON - CONTINUOUS

The shop is crowded with happy patrons sipping tea. Katara walks up to the hostess. Momo is perched on her shoulder.

KATARA
Table for two, please.

ZUKO (O.S.)
Uncle, I need two jasmine, one green, and one lychee.

Katara's face freezes in horror. Could it be? She turns to see Uncle behind the tea counter placing cups of tea onto Zuko's serving platter.

UNCLE
I'm brewing as fast as I can!

VERTIGO SHOT on Katara in shock. She runs out to alert the King. (NOTE: Uncle and Zuko do not see Katara.)

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. TOP OF THE HIGHEST TOWER - 9:00 PM

Aang and the guru are perched at the zenith of the Air Temple, under a brilliant canopy of stars. It is like they are in a huge planetarium.

AANG
This is the last chakra, isn't it?

GURU PATHIK
Yes. Once you open this chakra, you'll be able to go in and out of the Avatar state at will. And when you are in the Avatar state, you will have complete control and awareness of all your actions.

Aang is psyched to attain this result.

AANG
Let's do this!

GURU PATHIK
The Thought Chakra is located at the crown of the head. It deals with pure cosmic energy, and is blocked by earthly attachment.

Aang closes his eyes.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
Meditate on what attaches you to this world.

Aang's VIOLET COLORED thoughts quickly turn once again to Katara. They are all pleasant scenes showing Aang's loving connection with her.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.) (cont'd)
Now, let all of those attachments go. Let them flow down the river, forgotten.

Aang snaps out of his meditation, incredulous.

AANG
What? Why would I let go of Katara? I... I love her.

GURU PATHIK
Learn to let her go, or you can not let the pure cosmic energy flow in from the universe.

AANG
(baffled, a bit angry)
Why would I choose "cosmic energy" over Katara? How could it be a bad thing that I feel an attachment to her? Three chakras ago that was a good thing!

GURU PATHIK
(intense)
You must learn to let go!

Aang is torn and confused.

INT. KING'S PALACE - NIGHT

Katara rushes into the palace in a panic. The king is not on his throne, but Azula, Mai, and Ty Lee are there (but are seated and lit in a way so that Katara can't see their faces yet.)

KATARA
(breathless)
Thank goodness you're here, Suki! Something terrible is going on. The Fire Nation has infiltrated the city -- I just saw Prince Zuko and his Uncle!

Azula and the girls exchange looks. This is big news.

KATARA (cont'd)
We have to tell the Earth King right away!

AZULA
Oh, don't worry -- I'll be sure to let him know.

Katara realizes something's not right. She draws some water out of her skin, but before she can strike, Ty Lee gets the jump on her and blocks her chi. Katara's water splashes to the floor. Momo SCREECHES and flies out of the palace. Azula steps out of the shadows and stands over the incapacitated Katara.

AZULA (cont'd)
So, Zu-Zu's in the city too. I think it's time for a family reunion.

Off Katara's look of horror...

EXT. TOP OF THE HIGHEST TOWER - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT)

Aang sits there, baffled.

AANG
I'm sorry, but I can't let go of Katara.

GURU PATHIK
Aang, to master the Avatar state, you must open all the chakras. Surrender yourself.

AANG
(deep breath)
Okay, I'll try.

Aang closes his eyes and resumes his meditation. We slip into his head-space.

GURU PATHIK (V.O.)
Now think of your attachments, and let them go. Let the pure cosmic energy flow...

We see a VIOLET COLORED vision of Katara, but it falls back until it becomes a single star in the heavens. It is just Aang in the cosmos. Aang turns to face a several hundred-foot tall version of himself in the Avatar state, with eyes and tattoos glowing. He suddenly realizes his is on a knife-edge traverse over a celestial chasm. Aang begins to walk slowly towards the giant, glowing Avatar. In a surreal fashion he hears Katara's SCREAMS swelling from behind.

KATARA
No! Let me go!

Aang turns to see a vision of Katara who is in imminent danger -- chained up in a prison. Aang looks back and forth between the Avatar and Katara -- what will his choice be? Aang runs toward Katara but the bridge crumbles beneath him and he is sucked down into the chasm.

AANG
(SCREAMS)

Aang snaps out of his trance. He sees he is back on the roof with the guru. Aang leaps to his feet, desperate.

AANG (cont'd)
Katara is in danger! I have to go!

GURU PATHIK
No, Aang! By choosing attachment, you have locked the chakra! If you leave now, you won't be able to go into the Avatar state at all!

Aang stands for a beat with his back turned to the guru. Without responding, he leaps down the side of the temple, and the guru is left alone with a grave expression. A few moments later, Aang races through the skies on Appa, and the temple fades in the distance.

INT. METAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

Toph continues 'metalbending.' The metal wall is now split open slightly. Toph performs one last move, ripping the metal completely open.

EXT. COUNTRY PATH - CONTINUOUS

The noise of the metal ripping startles Xin Fu and Master Yu. They stop the carriage and go to the back of the cart to investigate. They see the back of the metal box ripped open. Toph is gone.

MASTER YU
It's another one of her tricks!

XIN FU
("You idiot!")
There's a giant hole in the box -- how is that a trick?!

TOPH
It's not. It's the real deal.

Toph sneaks up behind them and delivers a couple Earthbending attacks to smack the guys around. Then she knocks them both into the box. She metalbends the hole in the box closed, trapping Xin Fu and Master Yu inside.

TOPH (cont'd)
I <u>am</u> the greatest Earthbender in the world. Don't you two dunderheads ever forget it.

And with that, Toph bends an Earthwave and rides it back toward Ba Sing Se.

XIN FU
I'm going to be stuck in here forever with you, aren't I?

Beat.

MASTER YU
I have to go to the bathroom.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CAMP - NIGHT

Sokka (with wolf paint make-up) straps on his machete and picks up a war club. Hakoda walks up to him.

HAKODA
Ready to go knock some Fire Nation heads?

SOKKA
You don't know how much this means to me, Dad. I'll make you proud. And I'll finally prove to you what a great warrior I am.

Hakoda places his hand on Sokka's shoulder.

HAKODA
Sokka, you don't have to prove anything to me. I'm already proud of you, and I've always known you're a great warrior.

SOKKA
Really?

HAKODA
Why do you think I trusted you to look after our tribe when I left?

Sokka smiles and father and son head off to the ships together. Just then, Appa flies into camp. The look on Aang's face says it all.

SOKKA
This can't be good news.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - APPA'S BACK - LATER

Aang and Sokka are flying to Ba Sing Se. Sokka looks back at the Water Tribe ships which are heading off to the battle. Hakoda watches him go with pride and love in his eyes.

INT. PALACE - PRISON - NIGHT

Azula (still in costume) walks down the hall, escorted by the Dai Li. They lead her to Long Feng's cell, then exit. Throughout this scene, Azula acts like Long Feng has caught her, but she is actually playing him.

AZULA
What is this about? Your agents show up in the middle of the night and drag me down here? You will not treat a Kyoshi warrior this way.

LONG FENG
But you're not a Kyoshi warrior, are you?... Princess Azula of the Fire Nation.

A beat. Azula's eyes flare wide - a very convincing display that she is caught.

AZULA
What do you want?

LONG FENG
I want to make a deal. It's time that I regain control of Ba Sing Se. And you have something I need...

AZULA
Oh?

LONG FENG
The Earth King's trust.

AZULA
Why should I help you?

LONG FENG
Because I can get you the Avatar.

AZULA
I'm listening.

Long Feng smiles, thinking he's caught her in an ingenious trap.

EXT. UPPER RING - THE JASMINE DRAGON - NIGHT

Uncle and Zuko are sweeping up when a messenger enters. He bows as he hands Uncle a scroll.

MESSENGER
A message from the royal palace.

Uncle takes the scroll and reads it.

UNCLE
I... I can't believe it.

ZUKO
What is it, Uncle?

UNCLE
Great news! We've been invited to serve tea... to the Earth King!

Off Uncle and Zuko's excited reactions...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PALACE - PRISON - THE SAME TIME

Azula walks down the hall, leaving Long Feng behind. She smiles intently. Her plan is falling into place.

FADE TO WHITE.

TO BE CONTINUED...

END OF SHOW